

Comments to the NOSB
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I'll like to make some brief comments from a consumer perspective - a consumer who really relies on organics. Basically, if it's not organic I don't eat it.

The question in my mind is . . . can I rely on the USDA to maintain the integrity of the organics that are so important to me?

The jury is still out on that one. We had a good thing going with organics and I'm not so sure that the USDA's hijacking of organics is going to prove a good thing in the end. So far there have been some bumps in the road. Sure the USDA organic label is great for marketing but what about quality.

First, there was the push to try to slip the big three into organics. Then the race to the bottom began when standards stricter than the USDA's were disallowed. I know that those who seek to dilute organics will attempt to infiltrate the process and keep coming back again and again to rewrite the standards bit by bit. I'm especially concerned about additions to the National List and livestock factory farming provisions but there are many more.

Then there is the issue of GMOs. Consumers assume and expect organics that are free of GMOs but that's far from the truth. I've already given up corn - yes, even organic - because of what I perceive to be pervasive GMO contamination. Non-GMO canola and soy are also rapidly becoming thing of the past. The commercial introduction of GMO wheat will be the final blow to genetically viable food staples of the world.

The same agencies, including the USDA, that are promoting biotech with one hand are promoting organics with the other. What are they thinking?? And why isn't more being done by organic stakeholders to prevent what seems to be the inevitable?

If this trend continues, the future of organics looks grim for consumers but not for those milking the cash cow of the organic image. I can see a time coming when to me, as a consumer, an organic label might not mean much. I often wonder what I will do when there is nothing acceptable left to eat.

What are consumers to do? Well, I do what I can on the home front by growing more of my own food these days. And I do what I can to sound the alarm. I for one will not just shut up and eat and that's why I'm here today.

These days 'responsible regulation' has really become an oxymoron - much like 'good corporate citizen' - and decision-makers in government are becoming less and less responsive. I have always thought of the NOSB as the 'good guys'. That's why I am turning to you in hopes that when push comes to shove, you'll hang tough and do the right thing. I know that can't be an easy task. There must be tremendous pressure from

all sides to cut deals and compromise. I just hope that in the end the consumer doesn't lose once again.

My health is in your hands. Please, please do everything you can to keep organic, organic!